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360Zine

Issue 8 | August 2007

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

HANDS-ON PREVIEW

BIOSHOCK

Believe the hype! It's looking better than ever...

PLUS!
INTERVIEW
WITH BIOSHOCK'S
JOE McDONAGH



PLUS!
FABLE 2
PES 2008
SOUL CALIBRE



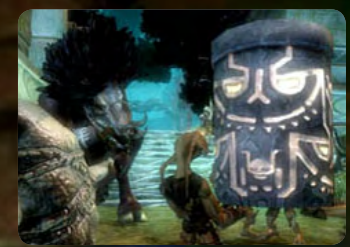
COOL PREVIEW!
GTA IV

The latest trailer from Liberty City

REVIEWED!



1 THE DARKNESS
Hellish good fun



2 OVERLORD
A rollicking adventure



3 FLATOUT
It's smashtastic

PLUS LOADS MORE!



Welcome to 360Zine



And welcome to a bumper issue! Our cover story says it all this month: Bioshock is looking nothing short of phenomenal. We sent Kieron to get hands-on with the horror and he came back ranting about wanting more. We can't wait for the final release next month, but in the meantime you can whet your appetite with our exclusive interview with Irrational's Joe McDonagh.

It's also been a good month for new games with The Darkness, Overlord and FlatOut all making a strong case for your financial outlay.

One thing that didn't make the issue was our planned interview with Major Nelson. Worry not though - we have a pile of questions from you (thanks for your response) and we'll hopefully have Larry's answers next time...

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

READER FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of the new issue!

Don't miss! This month's top highlights

Bioshock

HUGE PREVIEW! The thinking man's FPS...

PLUS!

Community Section

THE BEST SITES REVEALED
PAGE 33



Bioshock interview

Joe McDonagh
PAGE 11



GTA IV

WATCH THE NEW VIDEO TRAILER!
PAGE 15



The Darkness

Scarily good
PAGE 21



Overlord

The RPG with a sense of humour
PAGE 24

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

PES 2008

Soul Calibur IV

Splinter Cell: Conviction

Bioshock

Grand Theft Auto IV

Fable 2

Tomb Raider: Anniversary

Project Gotham Racing 4

The Bourne Conspiracy

World In Conflict

Rise Of The Argonauts

Civilization Revolution

The Darkness

Overlord

FlatOut: Ultimate Carnage

Armored Core

XBLA Round-Up

MEET THE TEAM

Probably the best games writers on the planet



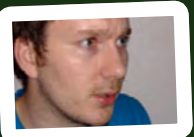
Kieron Gillen

Kieron's been hands-on with Irrational's Bioshock. And reviewed The Darkness. The lucky lad.



Steve Hill

Always one for a good gag, Steve has been playing Overlord. Oh, how he laughed...



Lee Hall

Lee can't get enough of GTA IV. But we managed to also get him to turn his hand to Fable 2.



Ian Morris

Ian begged us to let him play FlatOut. Read his glowing review on page 27.



Chris Schilling

Armored Core has made it to Xbox 360. Chris is on hand to sort the men from the mechs.



PES 6
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER

Publisher: Konami

Developer: Konami

Heritage: A galactico-filled squad of earlier PES games

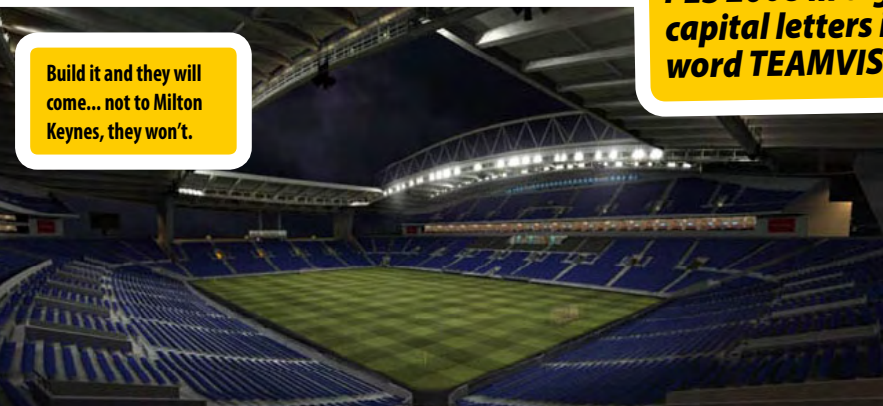
Link: www.konami-europe.com

ETA: October

There's one answer to pure skill – studs-up pain.



Build it and they will come... not to Milton Keynes, they won't.

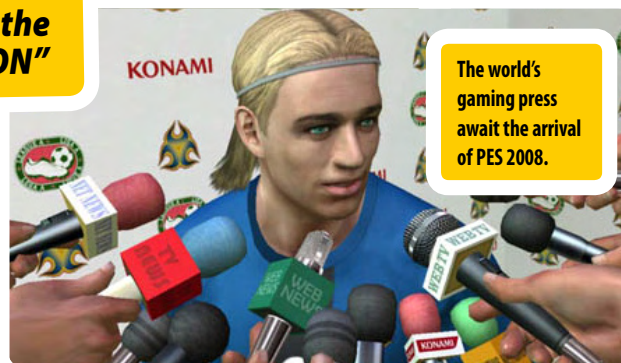


The idiotic expressions of top footballers are captured perfectly.

Ronaldinho perfects his new 'elbow in the temple' manoeuvre.



"Scratched across PES 2008 in big capital letters is the word TEAMVISION"



The world's gaming press await the arrival of PES 2008.

FIRST LOOK

Pro Evolution Soccer 2008

Intelligent opponents at last... who needs Xbox Live?

What's the story?

The football masterpiece Pro Evo is back for a new season.

What do we know?

Scratched across PES 2008's tactical chalkboard in big capital letters is the word TEAMVISION. It's basically an advanced new AI system that enables computer-controlled opponents to learn your tactics and exploit your weaknesses.

The idea is to turn single-player gaming into something approaching the thrill of its multiplayer equivalent – quite a challenge when you consider PES with mates is about as pure a gaming experience you can enjoy.

Scouring the rest of Konami's tactical notepad we're pleased to see that free-kicks have been reportedly fixed so you can alter how you defend set-pieces and take advantage of players with specialist deadball skills.

Also in PES' masterplan to see off the challenge of FIFA 08 is an increased arsenal of feints and dummies designed to make attacking play more varied and thrilling than ever.

When do we get more?

We should be able to have a kickabout just before the new footy season gets underway.

Anything else to declare?

Konami are acutely aware of the kind of online exploits that took the edge off a brilliant Xbox Live experience. We're expecting them to guard robustly against players crashing matches in a bid to preserve their wins record.

PES 2008 vs FIFA 08!
[Click here to get it!](#)

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
[Click here to tell us what you think of PES 2008](#)

**IT'S ALL ABOUT...
TO START**



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Publisher: Namco Bandai
Developer: Project Soul
Heritage: Soul Blade and Soul Calibur series
Link: www.bandainamcogames.co.jp/english
ETA: 2008



That's genius bra design... or else she's got no nipples.

"The brilliant, empowering and sumptuous sword battling game is back"

FIRST LOOK

Soul Calibur IV

Shamelessly teased by a semi-clad woman...

What's the story?

Soul Calibur – the brilliant, empowering and sumptuous sword battling game is back for a fourth iteration.

What do we know?

Not as much as we'd like to after a teaser trailer that set our pulses racing, but delivered no rock solid details of gameplay.

Plotwise, Soul Calibur IV brings together the two legendary blades of the multiple scrapper series' to developer Project Soul's name – Soul Edge and Soul Calibur.

Clearly there's going to be some kind of epic power struggle, and some fiery locales, and some familiar characters.

Tight-arse Mitsurugi returns, showcasing incredible detailed character art which surely can't quite represent the visuals we can expect to see when the blood and muck starts to splatter in-game.

Clad in black armour, spinning nutter Nightmare is also looking flash and pointy. Though how Ivy will be able to fight with those two watermelons strapped to her chest is anyone's guess...

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Soul Calibur IV

When do we get more?

They couldn't have given us much less to go on... Expect some lively screens in the summer to further whet our appetite for a fighting game that will, we are happy to predict, be lush.

Anything else to declare?

There'll be new characters as well as the old faces, interactive arenas and new gameplay modes too. But Namco are keeping mum at the moment...



SOUL TRAILER
Click here to watch the latest video footage



Samurai swords – a bit camp in the world of Soul Calibur...



Disappear into a crowd for camouflage.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Splinter Cell

"If EA were making this, it would be called Splinter Cell: Street Wars"

The shadows and the tramps are your friends. Embrace them to survive!

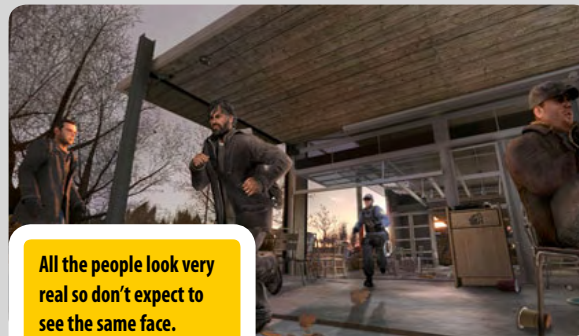


Sam's attempt to earn a living as an office temp was scuppered.

The beard and the hair says it all. Feral Sam will now fight the law and win.



All the people look very real so don't expect to see the same face.



FIRST LOOK

Splinter Cell: Conviction

It's official: Sam Fisher has finally gone feral.

So what's going on?

Sam has been undercover so many times, and been so close to the terrorists, that he's now been cut off by the US government and, worse still, they want him dead and his thermal goggles returned to Radio Shack. Forget undercover, going 'black' or any Mission Impossible style missions, this is just Sam on his own, trying to figure out what the hell is going on and work out who double crossed him this time around.

How will it work?

Sam really is on his own. He's dumped in a town and has to make his own way around, finding essential items and avoiding his enemies. Sam is effectively an SAS tramp who needs to build a network of contacts to source info, guns and support in order to solve his own mystery and get his own life back. There are sprawling city scenes, alive with pedestrians, traffic and hot dog sellers. Concealing weapons is vital as is using the crowd as your camo and, occasionally, defence. See an enemy approaching and you'll need to throw nearby tables and weave between crowds in a cafe just to escape. There's no black military bases and vacant car parks to stalk this time around. If EA were making this, it would be called Splinter Cell: Street Wars.

And there's a multiplayer mode?

Yes, but instead of just searching for the secret document before the time limit runs out, you'll be searching for online enemies in a packed crowd. Pay attention to how they behave and their appearance and you might stand a chance of snagging your needle in the haystack.

THINK EVIL. BREED EVIL. CONTROL ALL.



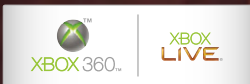
 REPLAY THIS VIDEO

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HANDS ON

BIOSHOCK

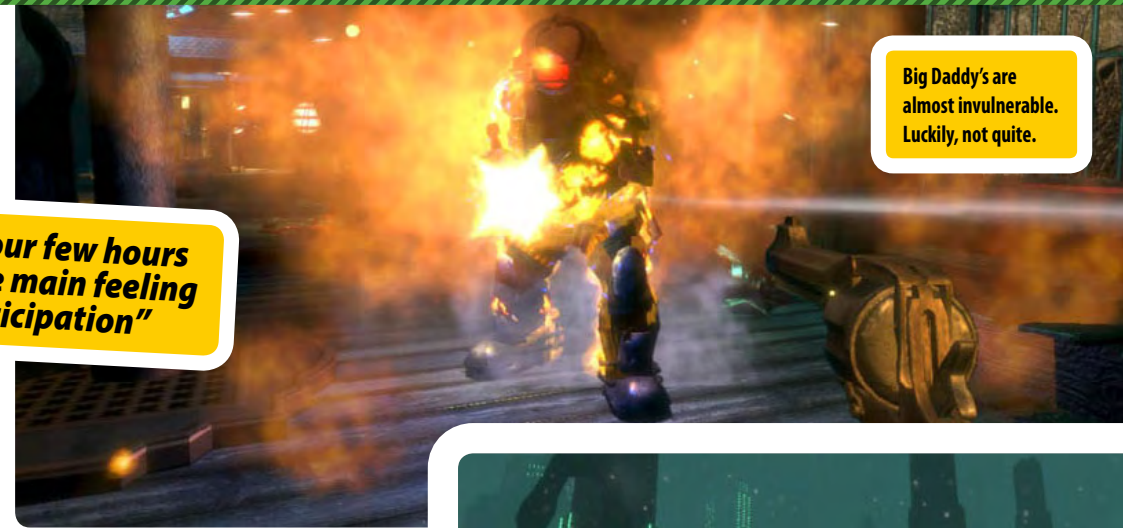
Underwater. Overwhelming.

As feelings go, it's a good one. Finally getting hands-on with one of the most anticipated games of the year. But when you're playing... it's a whole mass of feelings. There's fear from making your way through a ruined underwater retro-city. There's pity as you suddenly realise what acts the game may ask to do to some of the defenceless denizens of the world. But, when we stepped away

after our few hours play, the main feeling is anticipation. In that, soon – but not soon enough – we're going to get to play the rest.

Bioshock has been described as the "Spiritual Sequel" to Irrational's ancient PC-classic System Shock 2, but it's actually a lot more similar in tone to its even more ancient prequel. While its sequel was a role-playing game hybridised with a first-person shooter,

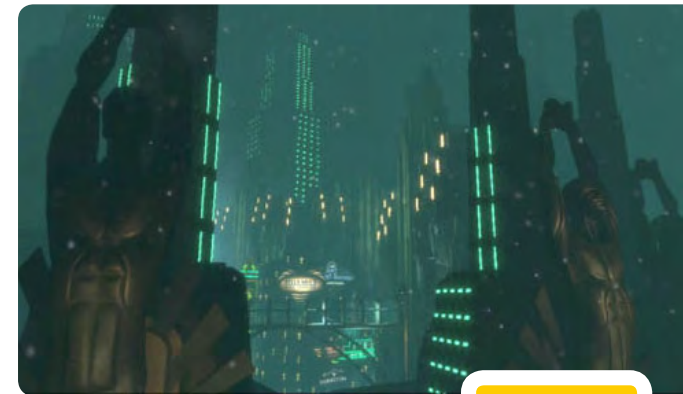
"After our few hours play, the main feeling is anticipation"



Big Daddy's are almost invulnerable. Luckily, not quite.

complete with all manner of statistics, the first System Shock was more of a pure shooter... just a shooter which realised there was no need to need to be "pure". You could be an adventure. You can be an exploratory game. You can be anything.

Bioshock's in exactly the same horror-flecked vein. As you progress ➤



Your initial view of Rapture. It all looks so peaceful from here...



Splicers have warped themselves physically and morally through their use of the genetic modifier "Adam". Just say no, kids.





You probably don't want to know what the Little Sister is going to do with that syringe. I mean, really.

Little Sisters draw Adam out of corpses with their enormous syringes. Yum.



>Bioshock continued

through the atmospheric ruined environments of Rapture, you end up thinking of your weapons more as tools, with multiple uses – some explicitly stated, and others which you end up discovering for yourself. For a game with as many choices as this, how it introduces them to you is particularly elegant. Essential things to know get introduced with vignettes you come across – for example, the first of your powers allows you to throw electricity bolts to stun opponents... however, you come across a pair of Rapture's monstrous inhabitants, Slicers – standing in a pool of water, eating someone, and your in-game mentor suggests aiming at the water, not them, as the current will get the pair of them. Not only does it give you one tactical use, but it also introduces you to the idea of using your abilities for things

other than they're explicitly for. Experimentation is encouraged.

Also, if you try something a little out of the ordinary, you'll get a contextual help in that place. For example, you're introduced to hacking the mechanical denizens of the place early. If you approach a deactivated flying drone, you can turn it to your side by playing a sub-game. It's basically a minor puzzle game, like old-puzzler Pipemania, based around trying to route fluids in a grid of squares between one part and the other. However, you then realise >



Never bring a bit of old piping to a gunfight, Slicer.



"You're introduced to hacking the mechanical denizens of the place early"

Piano-playing monsters are the worst of the monsters. Out of control and out of tune.



>Bioshock continued

you can hack anything, with varying levels of difficulty. Momentarily deactivate a gun-turret, and you can turn it to your side. Hack a camera and turn it on your side. Hack a healing station and the enemies – who will actively try and use them as much as you – will have a surprise as it blows up in their faces. And that's just the surface of it. Choice is all. Playing further, and new mechanics are introduced. For example, the game's research system, which works like a particularly violent version of Pokemon Snap. Manage to take enough snaps of a type of monster, and you research it, gaining information about its weaknesses and even new special abilities to equip.

That's all just the tip of the iceberg. Appropriately for a game set at the bottom of the sea, its all about depth. ●

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
Bioshock!

**"The game's research
system works like a violent
version of Pokemon Snap"**

Big Daddy act as the
protector of Little Sister
from nasty people like –
well – you.

The art staff have gone to town
making seemingly endless
period-appropriate signs.

360Zine

HOW COMPLETE?

85%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

94%

It leaves you wanting more. But in a good way...



BIOSHOCK

"It's your story, it's your game, it's the future of game design for the FPS"

Irrational's Bioshock inches ever closer to release. We inch closer to Irrational's Joe McDonagh...

LISTEN TO THE AUDIO INTERVIEW NOW!

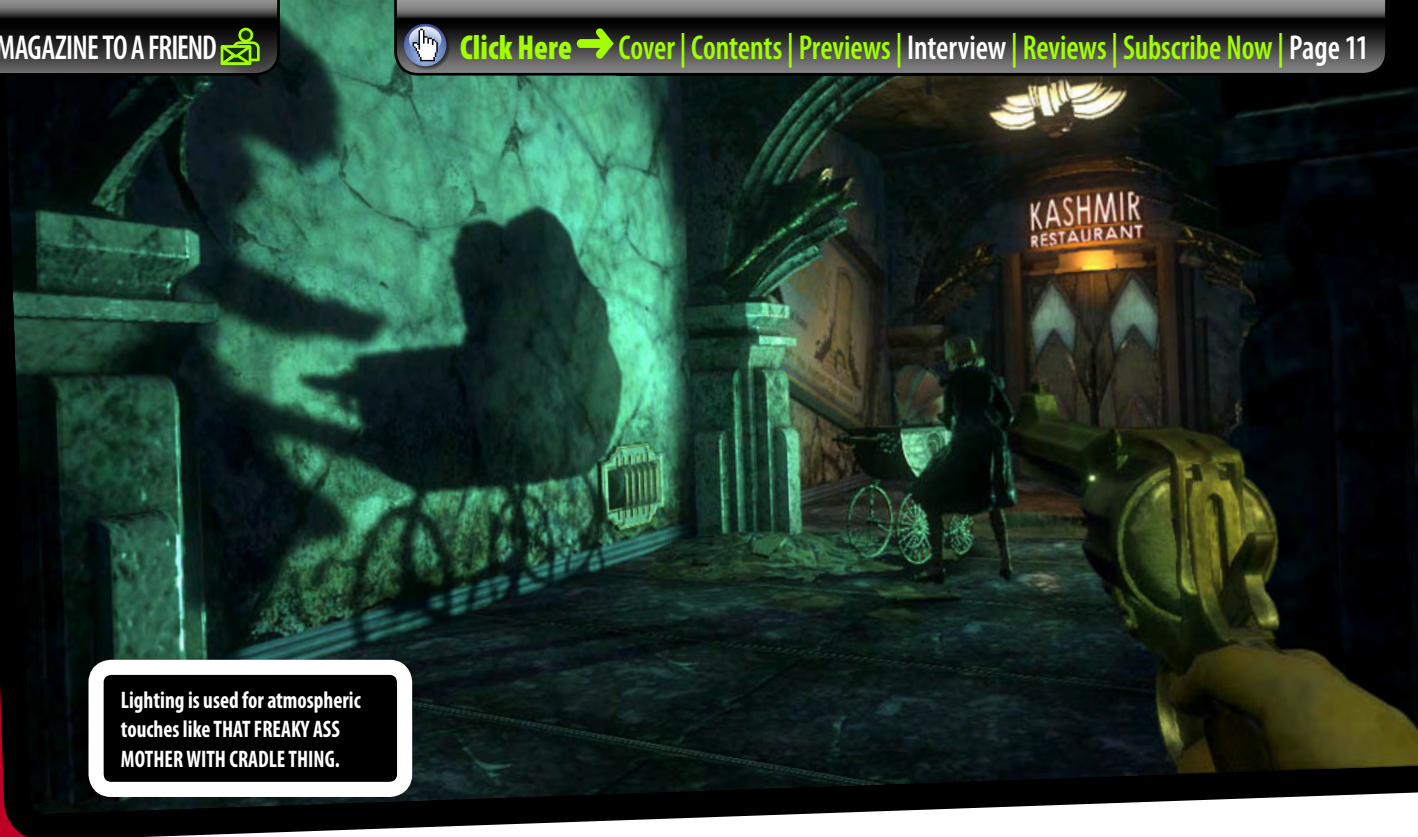
The full interview is 17 minutes long, so you can click here to start the interview playing, then continue to browse the rest of the magazine while it plays if you want. Audio controls will appear and remain on the page to allow you to pause, stop, rewind, etc.

CLICK HERE NOW TO PLAY!



Joe McDonagh

After the end of London's Elixir of PC-politics game Republic: The Revolution Joe McDonagh headed down under to take a position as Business Development for Irrational's Australian leg.



Lighting is used for atmospheric touches like THAT FREAKY ASS MOTHER WITH CRADLE THING.

Irrational's Joe McDonagh is in a good mood. He should be. He's spent the past week or so, travelling Europe and letting eager games journalists get their first hands-on experience with the opening levels of their highly-anticipated horror-shooter (with nobs on) Bioshock. After we've had our first experience of Rapture, we step aside, to have a few words...

What's it like to watch real people finally playing your game?

It's been fascinating watching over the last few weeks. The thing which seems to really resonate with people is the physicality of the world. People just want to pick things up, break things, play with these toys. I saw this guy, pick this body up – set it fire with incinerate,

drag it across the level and then throw it at a big daddy. It's that sort of experimentation which people are enjoying.

Since it has so many of these systems, how do you approach teaching people how to play?

It's a difficult balance to strike between showing the player how to use these plasmids [In game special powers – Ed] and giving them every way to do it. All the first four or five plasmids you find, there's clearly a set-up to how you're meant to use it. We had to put that in, as people were lost. People aren't used to this. People are used to having guns and shooting people with them. They aren't used to having these tools you can re-interpret the environment with. So

while we did that, we wanted to leave some things for the player to discover. It would be no fun just to be told what to do, and just did that.

I was entertained by seeing a Splice trying to reach an item on a high ledge. A subtle introduction to "We will hide stuff everywhere".

One of the things we feel very strongly is that "tutorials" should be integrated into the gameplay. I think it's lazy to make a gamer sit through 5 or 10 minute section at the start of the game, and have the classic World War 2 <gruff voice> "Hey, marine. You're in a training camp. Now pick those guns up. Now press left to move left". Because that's boring. What we tried to do is two things – integrate it into the



"For us, the most important concept is choice."

He'll catch his death of cold like that.



One of Bioshock's complicated and emergent scenarios. Probably involving fish.

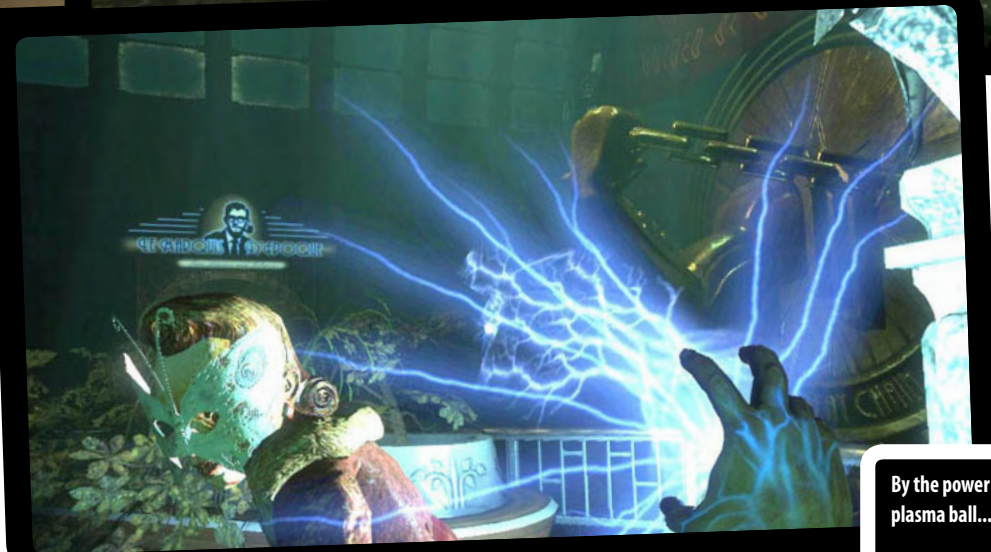
> Interview continued

gameplay, like in situations I've just described, but also this system we call Adaptive training. The game will watch you, and if you're consistently making the same mistake, it'll give you advice. For us, that's the future of tutorials.

Which is important. Irrational's previous game in the genre, System Shock 2, sold 250,000. If Bioshock did the same, that'd be disastrous. How are you balancing depth with accessibility?

For us, the most important concept is

choice. It's about expressing that choice in a physical rather than numerical fashion. What we didn't want to do is fiddle around on nerdy screens, tweaking your strength to 18/98. We wanted to express it in the world. In a first-person shooter it doesn't make any sense to do +5% damage. What makes sense is Incinerate II you can see that it sets on fire twice as much of an area as Incinerate I. We wanted to focus the player on making less more interesting choices, and that's through the plasmids. What plasmids you choose to carry at any given moment, and how you choose to upgrade those plasmids. >



By the power of plasma ball...



Shop 'til you drop.

> Interview continued

Which you do at the Gene Bank, yes? How common are they?

Pretty common. It's been a fine balancing act. This game is fundamentally a shooter. Whenever you take the best bits from genres and add them to existing genres, there's a spiritual battle going on. We were very clear this was a shooter first and

absolutely be the best shooting experience you can have, or at least comparable to the best shooting experience you can have. It's illogical to advocate choice, and then to force that choice on people. One of the choices is NOT having to have the choice, and playing it in a straight up and down shooting fashion.

It's interesting in that choice is also expanded to the enemies. I saw

foremost. One of our axioms was, if you wanted to play this game as a shooter, you should be able to – and it should

Gentlemanly weapons predominate in its period setting.

one of the Splicers run off to heal themselves, for example.

We're so used to cookie-cutter AI. Why shouldn't AI interact in the world like you do? And some really weird stuff happens all the time. I remember at E3... the first bit, you walk in the room and turrets go on and start shooting. Back then, it was quite unstable so I had to be careful how I showed it. I did it 80 times, and during one of them I think I delayed the start. I came in the door, started shooting, skipped to one side and the turret shot a splicer behind me. She just came running into the room, shouting "DON'T MAKE MUMMY MAD!!!". I was completely Gob-

"We were very clear this was a shooter first and foremost."

smacked. I was like "I've never seen that before... and that's my demo".

It opens up the game so much...

One of the great gaming experiences is talking to a mate, saying what you did. But if you're playing the same game, you mostly did the same thing. It becomes infinitely more interesting when you say "I played this game... and I did this." "Really – well I did this". "I didn't even know you could do that!". Because then it becomes a unique experience, your experience, and you're not just being lead through it by your hand. It's your story, it's your game, and I think it's the future of game design for the FPS. ●



Developer: Irrational
Publisher: 2K Games
Players: 1
Features: System Shock 2, Freedom Force, SWAT 4, Tribes Vengeance
Heritage: www.2kgames.com/bioshock/
ETA: August

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LATEST NEWS

Grand Theft Auto IV

Trailer trashed? Don't think so...

Holy crap! There's no way GTA IV can be that good – surely... Have you ever seen a trailer as exciting, as tantalising, as 'wtf-was-that-sissy-arty-teaser-they-put-out-last-time' as the stunning Looking For That Something Special clip located on page 17? No? Nor have we.

Watching the trailer is like drinking a cocktail of testosterone, adrenaline, bull semen and vodka. It's sixty seconds of car chases, gun battles, incredible vehicles, achingly detailed graphics and subtle, delightful hints at an engrossing story delivered with incredible gameplay. And. Overall, we love it...

So, you get the picture – we're damned excited. And why not? It's rare

He doesn't wear seatbelts. Nor does the Queen, apparently.

"The headline features of the new trailer? Where do we start?"



these days that any game, let alone a sequel in a series that's number one so why try harder, smashes down the wooden door of our expectations and fires a salvo of excitement bullets up our jacksie.

The headline features of the new trailer? Where do we start?

The vehicles look frankly awesome. You'll get your hands on high-powered motorbikes, the Black Hawk chopper looks so damned good, and we can't wait to clap eyes on the super-charged

boats that we've been promised in the finished game.

The detail-soaked environments with cameos of scrapping kids and greasy hotdog sellers hit us next. And even on the fifth and sixth viewings the slightly spartan looking environments did little to deter us, though the fact that much of the sequences on show will be from cutscenes does take a little of the shine off things...

More promising is the game's plot, which is hinted at with Niko's comment

The wuss is wearing a crash helmet!



JUST HANGING AROUND

Will Niko be able to perform stunt manoeuvres? On this evidence he will...



TOP CHOPPER ACTION

We knew our hero could climb but, look – there's Niko dangling off a freakin' chopper!



TRUCKIN' GOOD FUN

And he's grabbed a truck here. Maybe he'll be able to jump between vehicles to collar enemies?



IV

"Rockstar aim to create the best crime story in any medium"

GTA IV boasts the most detailed hotdog sellers in game history.



"Sir, I beg you – no bazookas on the rides..."



I AM THE ANTI-HERO

Learn a little more about the star of GTA IV...



NAME: Niko Bellic

AGE: Hard to tell, but the lad's had a hard paper round

BIRTHPLACE: Wrong side of the tracks, Eastern Europe

LIKES: Cousin Roman, stubble, guns

DISLIKES: The law, doors, car windscreens

> GTA IV continued

that he was the "soul survivor" and in the theme of a search for someone special. Is our Eastern European friend, in Liberty City to catch up with cousin Roman, seeking revenge or hoping to be reunited with a loved one?

Certainly his scowl, his grim determination, and the phone call from an underworld fixer promising him information in exchange for a favour, suggests he won't be bringing flowers when he finally claps eyes on the poor sod he's tracking down.

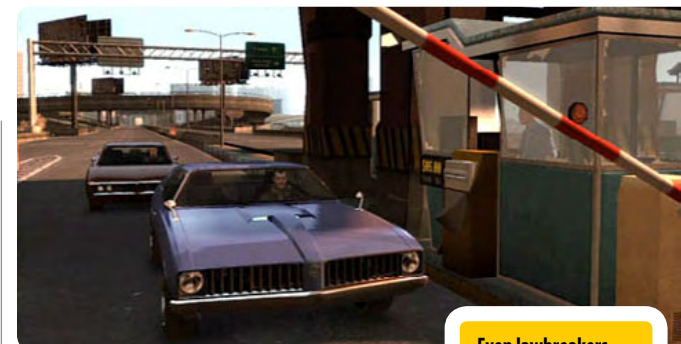
Rockstar bods are on record as saying they aim to create the best crime story in any medium, and the suggested plot, cast of characters and attention to detail that drips from every

scene in this latest trailer suggests they might just pull it off.

So what else caught our eye? Certainly the promise of much-improved vehicle physics got us going. The flipping cop car suggests the RAGE engine will make for far more realistic and enjoyable driving sequences that in GTAs of old.

Not evident in the trailer is a slew of gameplay info that reads like a wishlist for anyone who has played, loved and greedily hoped for more from the previous Grand Theft Autos.

Physicality is at the core of GTA IV with the same Euphoria physics engine underpinning the punch-ups in evidence that was much-hyped when the Indiana Jones game was showcased last year. Fisticuffs never



Even lawbreakers have to pay bridge tolls.

looked so damned real.

Niko will also be able to scale objects, so he is not confined to leathering it around on the floor. Should make finding a nice angle for a sniper shot a little easier...

Even nicking a car is a far more physical affair. You don't simply hurl an unsuspecting driver out of their motor, now you'll have to break windows and use your hotwiring skills to grab a vehicle, all the while hoping the busies

> GTA IV continued

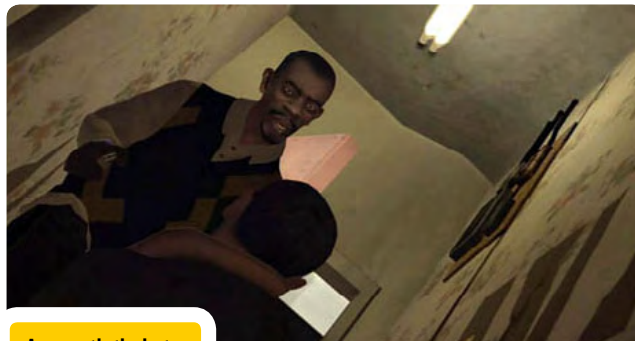
don't spy you.

Sound is also vital to the game's sense of living splendour, and we're not just talking about the vast soundtrack of licensed numbers from various musical decades. Dynamic sound means you be able to pinpoint the direction of fire, or the location of enemies far more realistically, spinning to lance them with a well-aimed bullet, should the whim take you. And it will.

You can't up your stats, but thankfully you can buy new clothes.



"The best thing about GTA IV is that it will be bigger and better on 360"



Apparently the last tenant died in the middle of a dirty protest.

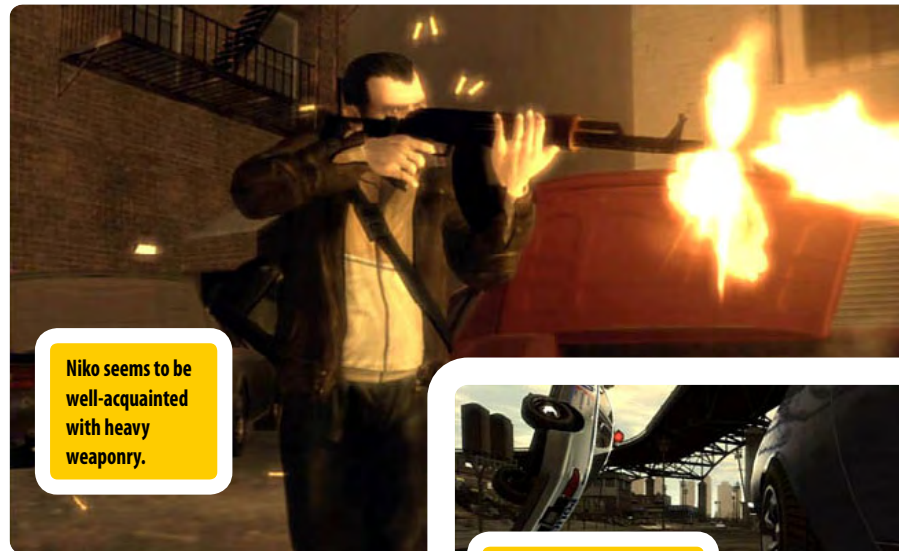
Time will be of the essence in GTA IV too, with time-specific missions and loads of time limited actions, though with just a few months left till a release date that Rockstar are determined to hit there's still no details on this yet. The clock is ticking...

The best thing about GTA IV as far as we're concerned is that it will be bigger and better on 360. It's only on our glorious console that you'll be able to get your hands on extra missions and kit through downloadable content released in 2008.

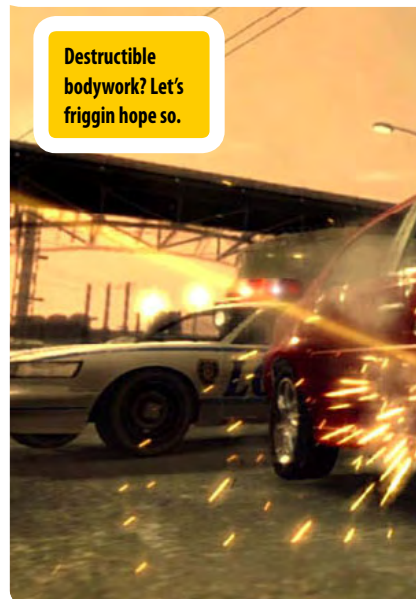
PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of GTA IV!

That said, there'll be plenty to keep you busy without shelling out hard-earned Microsoft points. Liberty City, which does away with loading times, is far more interactive than ever before, featuring far more buildings you can enter and spray with lead.

Throw in welcome improvements such as a tweaked fighting system, complete with a crosshair, and way more gore than ever and it's obvious GTA IV is set to floor anything that's gone before. ●



Niko seems to be well-acquainted with heavy weaponry.



Destructible bodywork? Let's friggin hope so.



A-Team-style car flips hint at delicious physics.

A SPECIAL SOMETHING
Watch the latest trailer video now.
Go on, then...



360Zine
IV

HOW COMPLETE?

86%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

95%

Odds-on to be the best GTA yet.



LATEST NEWS

Fable 2

We're getting a little emotional...

"My name's Peter Molyneux and I'm an addict." That's how it must have started for the legendary developer behind some of the world's most inventive - as well as some of the world's most disappointing - games.

Before Fable 2 Mr Molyneux was addicted to hyperbole. He couldn't resist spilling out his enthusiasm for videogames and their potential, even when the hardware his brilliant games were lashed to couldn't ever fully deliver his ambitious dreamscapes.

But he's finally kicking the habit - only emerging from time to time to give us game journos some choice musings on the kind of videogames he knows we're desperate to play - all full of emotion, moral dilemma and infinitely reactive to our actions...

He seems to have been calmed a little by the aforementioned sense of disappointment that unfairly took the edge off brilliant titles such as The Movies, which didn't live up to his heady claims. Well, how could they? Molyneux's ideas are still years ahead of what consoles can deliver...

Fable 2 - oh dear, another sequel from the man who hates doing sequels

The future's bright. The future's Fable 2.

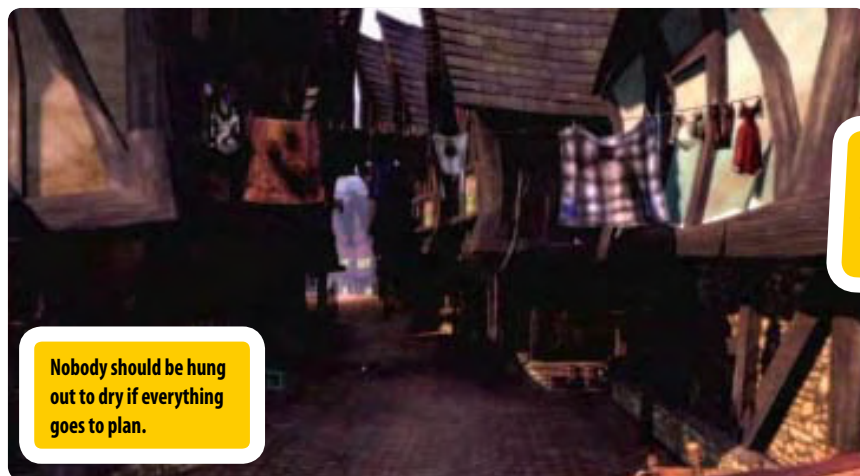


Go in peace...

"Molyneux has promised to do death differently"



Nobody should be hung out to dry if everything goes to plan.



- looks to improve on the epic RPG of ye olde Xbox lore, presenting more of the kind of engagement we've yearned to feel from games since we first realised Pong was rubbish.

Molyneux has already revealed that players, who will live out a full lifetime from childhood to maturity, will befriend a dog who will develop according to our in-game actions without ever being under our direct influence.

How your life will end, by the way, is a matter for some debate as Molyneux has promised to do death differently,

shying away from the usual respawn which means you effectively replay the last 20 minutes as punishment for being stuck in the eye till you keeled over.

Details on just how death will work are being held under Molyneux's distracting and impenetrable work cape.

He's also keeping a lid on other key improvements on Fable 1, notably the camera which has had a whole team of developers crafting it into a dynamic beast that will put the fixed viewpoint of the original game to shame.

Combat, as we know, will be controlled on a single button - and Molyneux is outwardly chuffed that this works very well, even though he's confident there was nowt wrong with the more complex battling of Fable 1...

Those who were desperate to see the difficulty level of Fable ramped up will be disappointed by a game that will be 'completable' by everyone (what, even my gran?). That said, some unspecified rewards will be opened up depending on your skill level. Molyneux's teasing us again...

On the informational upside, we can confirm that quests have been simplified in Fable 2 to avoid the masses of material in Fable 1 and the Lost Chapters that were simply never uncovered.



> Fable 2 continued

Efforts are being made, we're promised, to ensure that important incidents are signposted so you can see when a quest is available. Though you can still spend hours playing cards down the boozer while the world rots around you – hey, it's your choice...

Where Fable 2 looks certain to take a giant (and logical) step forward is in the emotional aspect, which is clearly a daily preoccupation of Mr Molyneux as he perches on his Creative Director throne.

The ambition for NPCs, for instance, is that they say, do, remember and comment so much more than in the previous Fable. Their lives are interwoven with the action of gameplay to move the series away from the separate 'hero stuff' and simulation aspects that made the first game seem a little schizophrenic.

In Fable 2, this rich body of characters helps stitch together the two sides of gameplay which basically boil down to having a life and going on quests – they'll react to locations and your persona and Lionhead even hope you'll strike up relationships with NPCs.

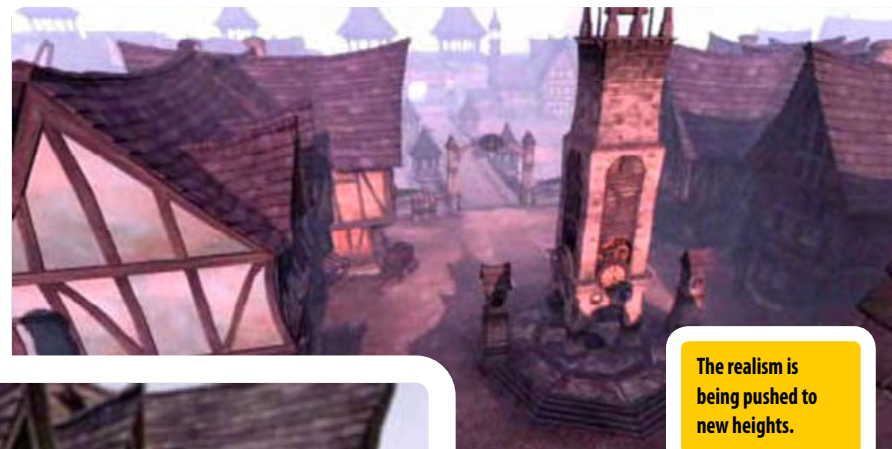
Once again that means you can also get jiggy with them – or at least fall in love... As well as just using expressions to flirt with people, or offering them gifts, building a relationship and trying to get someone to fall in love will be more protracted. Expect more realistic courtships where your prey – sorry, partner – will expect to be taken for a



stroll as well as bribed with goodies.

Making falling in love in Fable more real reflects a general commitment to realism, though not for realism's sake.

Fable 2 has been touted as a much darker game than the original Fable, but in truth we expect much of the darkness to come from the fact Fable 2 is a more rich emotional environment with ramped up visuals.



Simply upping the realism looks set to make weeping father's, slain enemies and imposing vistas more, well... real.

And this fidelity is nowhere more apparent than in your canine companion, a focus for your love and a source of so much affection. They've pulled in Hollywood animators to add vigour to a creature who you are intended to cherish like a real-life pet..

Influencing your dog will empower you in a measurable and rewarding way, giving you in-game influence without a button that equates to 'doggy kill', or 'fetch fido'.

That's the kind of realism that should elevate Fable from mere pastime to rewarding and immersive experience. And the kind of central idea that means Peter Molyneux is still the most exciting developer on the planet. ●

"Where Fable 2 looks certain to take a giant step forward is in the emotional aspect"

360Zine

HOW COMPLETE?

70%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

90%

FABLE 2

Molyneux's mission, Microsoft's financial muscle...

INCOMING

Preaching about the conversions...



Tomb Raider: Anniversary

Publisher: Eidos | **ETA:** September

We've been eyeing this comprehensive revamp of the 10-year-old original Tomb Raider jealously. Now TRA is finally headed our way, complete with a twist. Lara's 360 adventure will be split into four episodes, downloadable on Xbox Live marketplace starting in September at a cost of 2400 points.



World In Conflict

Publisher: Take Two | **ETA:** November 9

Another welcome addition to the 360 family is World In Conflict, originally a PC-only strategy meets action game. Set in a nightmare Cold War scenario in which the Berlin Wall never tumbled, WIC gives you control of everything from ground troops to nukes and fully destructible landscapes to smash up. You can also team up with other generals for 16-player dust-ups on Xbox Live.



Project Gotham Racing 4

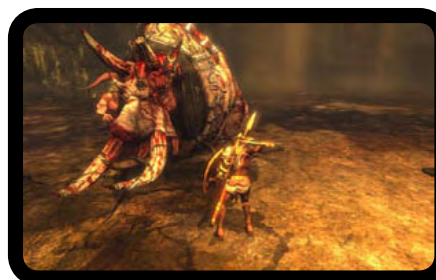
Publisher: Microsoft | **ETA:** November 9

With it's fourth instalment PGR finally gets to grips with the weather... The brilliant racer, in which you earn points for style as well as speed, sets up harsh conditions as an opportunity as well as an obstacle. As the latest white-covered trailer reveals, snow will be a 'mare for drivers who can't handle their motors.

Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Conspiracy

Publisher: Vivendi | **ETA:** Summer 2008

In The Bourne Conspiracy you'll discover the elite secret agent's true identity as you stalk prey around the world in your role as a secretive government assassin. When it hits the streets next summer expect third-person stealth, balls-out blasting and a few nods to the all-action movies.



Rise Of The Argonauts

Publisher: Codemasters | **ETA:** 2008

In the spirit of the magical stop motion animation epics created by Ray Harryhausen, ROTA looks set to be an epic adventure of myth and monsters. You play Greek hero Jason, King of Iolchis, and battle alongside the likes of Achilles and Hercules as you explore the mystical Aegean Sea aboard the Argo. Action RPG with the emphasis on

Sid Meier's Civilization Revolution

Publisher: 2K Games | **ETA:** Spring 2008

If you haven't played Civilization you haven't lived, and if you have played Civilization you haven't got a life. The game is the most addictive legal pursuit on the planet, imploring you to take just one more turn as you evolve entire civilisations in your pursuit of global dominance. And now it's headed to 360 in the form of Revolution, a fully fledged Sid Meier special in which you choose from 16 civs, go online and rule the world. If only life was that simple...



UPCOMING

SUMMER 2007

● **Medal Of Honor: Airborn** August

● **Tiger Woods 08** August

AUTUMN 2007

● **Lost** August

● **Huxley** August

● **Time Shift** September

● **Halo 3** September

WINTER 2007

● **Burnout 3** Christmas

● **Half-Life 2** October

SPRING 2008

● **Universe At War: Earth Assault** March 2008

● **Tom Clancy's EndWar** Christmas

● **Conan** Spring 2008

The Darkness

There's no need to be afraid of the dark. If you've got your shotgun, anyway

Jackie Estacado has a problem. On his twenty-first birthday, an ancient curse and handily unsobtle metaphor for his inner turmoil incarnates in the form of a mass of black tentacles and urges him into killing people. But it's not all bad – since Jackie's a hitman, he quite fancied killing a load of people anyway and besides, his mafia don uncle has ordered a hit on him. Cue a revenge rampage which proves as good a plot for videogame devastation as revenge rampages tend to.

And forget the slight sarcasm in that above paragraph. Yes, if you look at The Darkness coldly, it's a seriously silly blend of hokum: mafia-hitman meets Mr Tickle with road rage powers. But the game manages to pull it off with enough style and panache – thanks to good writing, voice-acting and design – that you buy into it completely. This is becoming a speciality for developers

Butchery in the butchers. Somehow appropriate.

Publisher: 2K Games
Developer: Starbreeze Games
Heritage: The Chronicle of Riddick: Escape From Butcher's Bay
Link: www.2kgames.com/thedarkness
Out: June 29th



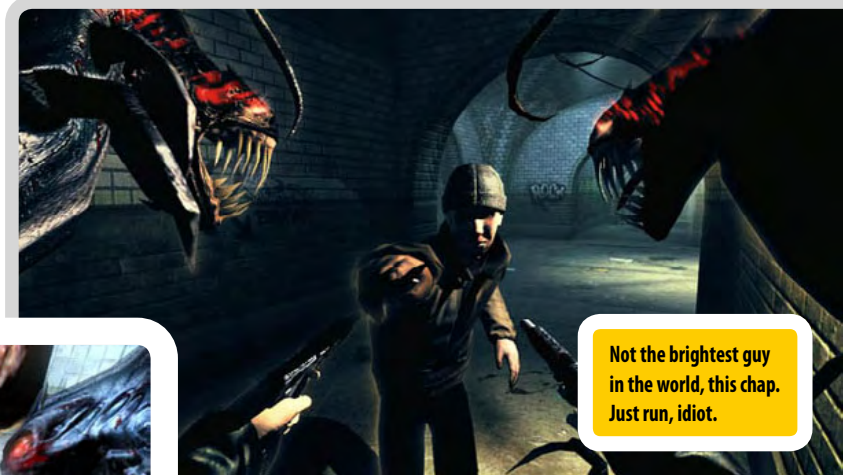
He asked for it.
No, really.

Starbreeze, who took the potentially rubbish Riddick licence and turned it into one of the most visceral first person games on the Xbox. Similarly when presented with a C-level comic-book license, they manage to make simply the best comic book game in years. Round of applause, guys.

Enter the darkness

Fundamentally, this is a first-person supernatural version of Max Payne, with a hub-based city to connect the adventure areas together rather than linear missions and a mass of powers taken from THE DARKNESS (It really

deserves capitals, at least once) rather than nabbed from old John-Woo movies. The Darkness, as the name suggests, gains its powers from skulking in the shadows. Shoot out lights and the Darkness energy builds. When you activate it, the tentacles writhe around you, basically acting as a handy shield to protect your vulnerable health. There's more aggressive tactics too. For example, your ability to extend a tentacle, creeping along indefinitely – as long as it's not shot or passes through too much life – to tear the face of an unwary victim. But it's not just a thing for violence – they'll be sections



Not the brightest guy in the world, this chap. Just run, idiot.

AN INKLING ON DARKLINGS

They come in all shapes and sizes...



Darkling



Beserker



Lightkiller



Darkling

Darklings are your in game servants, doing your bidding before returning to the void. Your bidding is generally causing chaos. The Gunner, pictured, often makes a good distraction when you're trying to close on the enemy. Hell, there's a good chance he could finish the job himself.





Time for light refreshments.

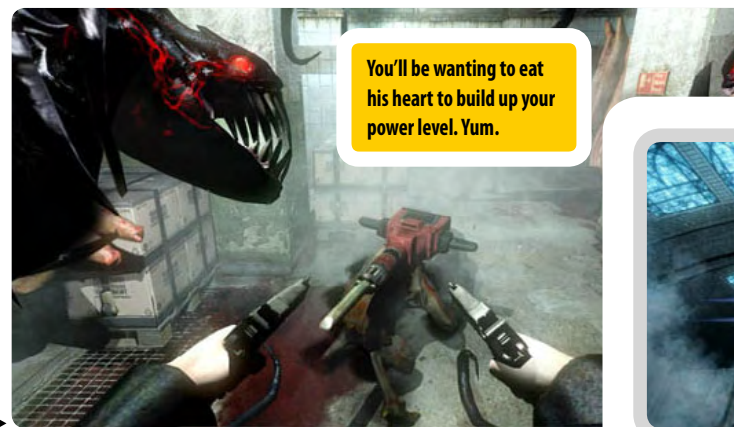


A different set of atmospheric effects come in play on the supernatural levels.

> The Darkness continued

where your passage is barred, and you'll realise the tentacle can slide through a small gap to unlock the door or similar. You'll find other moments with other tentacle powers, like the later-released more direct slash, which between slapping opponents can also drag around heavier items.

Your other main set of abilities – bar the later one to unleash a black hole – are the imp-like Darklings. These are servants you can summon to act in your bidding. They range from the basic Berserker sort who like (er) berserking, to the increasingly sophisticated gunner, kamikaze-bomber and light-blowing-up sorts. These two get involved in the puzzling >



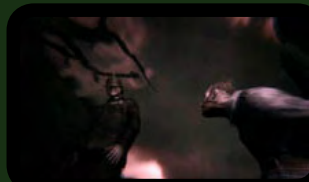
You'll be wanting to eat his heart to build up your power level. Yum.

The trench-warfare removes modern weaponry, swapping it for a trusty Luger and similar.

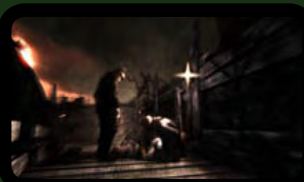


THE LONG SLOW MARCH INTO HELL

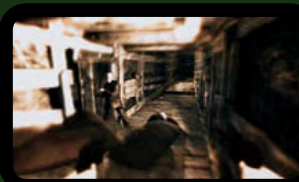
Darkness descends...



Arriving in hell after (er) some plot spoiler reason, you soon find something is amiss.



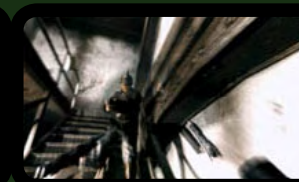
It's WWI forever, with Germans executing prisoners down in the trenches. Not Good.



This leads to a desperate run across the world, discovering the four horsemen...



And, eventually, allies who point you in the direction of an enormous Cannon: War.

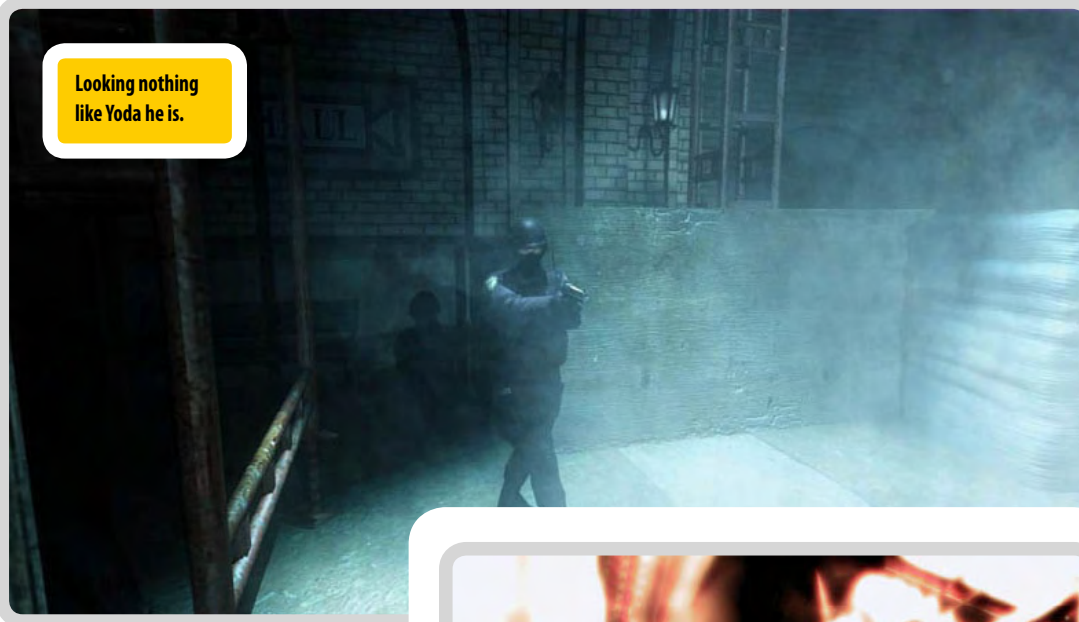


Which you have to take over by shooting lots of the aforementioned Germans.

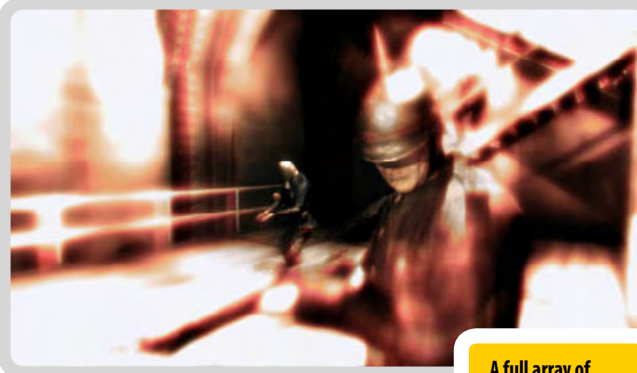
> The Darkness continued

as well as the mayhem, with the self-destructing ones required to clear a way. Which isn't to make this sound like a puzzle game in any way. While there's a lot of story, and subquests to take on the city, this is at its core a straight up shooting game. You could even play it without any of the Darkness powers if you wanted, and were willing to accept the hard time. The close-up gunplay finishing moves are particularly brutal, mixing close-melee and unloading a pistol in someone's head with devastating effect. The comparison to Max Payne even holds up with its occasional trips into more trippy levels. Where Max Payne went for a dream sequence, this literally takes you to – among other places – Hell. The initial image of WWI, full of zombie Germans and allied troops who've been literally

Looking nothing like Yoda he is.



"The close-up gunplay finishing moves are particularly brutal"



A full array of next-gen graphics next-genning.

stitched together is impressively atmospheric.

Its problems are the areas where it falls short of the potential of what it's aiming for. The city itself never really feels like a genuine slice of New York, being basically deserted of civilians, bar the subways, and generally enclosed. In some ways the unnatural realms work better as you're not comparing them to what you know the place is like.

As well thought out as the Darkness powers are, you'll start to think some of them perhaps could have been pushed

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

Long opening interactive cut-scene in car. Hurry up.

The Darkness incarnates. That's what we've come for.

OH NO! THEY'VE GONE AND DONE IT!



First brutal gunshots.

Wandering around the hub system.

Bloodthirsty revenge and more bloodthirsty revenge.

further (dragging around scenery to actually kill people) or tightened up (the creeping tentacle can occasionally be a little hard to control).

For the online players, you may think eight players is a little disappointing, but even that's leavened by the game modes flexibility in allowing you to be a Human, Darkling or a Shapeshifter able to move between the two. And do you really want to spend so much of the game shooting out lightbulbs?

Ultimately though, while Jackie Estacado has a few problems, you quickly realise that being in an underwhelming game isn't among them. Step into the Dark. ●

Kieron Gillen

360Zine Verdict

A light at the end of the tunnel, but who cares? We're having fun in the dark.

👍 Imaginative character.

👍 Great settings.

👎 New York unconvincing.

87%



Overlord

The lord of the things...

Whatever retro-bores might tell you about Monkey Island or Sam & Max, videogames are not a natural medium for comedy. A fat man exploding in a Monty Python film is hailed as a work of comic genius, whereas a fat man exploding in Overlord comes across as trying too hard. The primary purpose of a game is not to make you laugh (or indeed cry), it's to fill up the hours when you're alone, it's raining, and there's nothing decent on the telly.

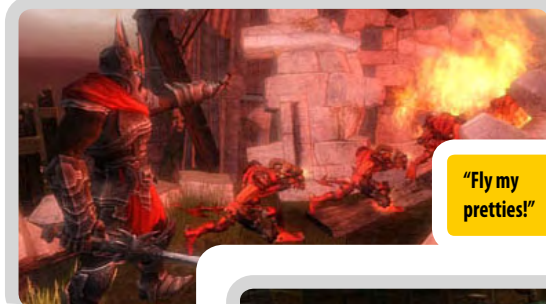
Step forward Overlord, notionally a send-up of the fantasy roleplaying genre. A largely pointless exercise, it's a bit like making a James Bond spoof, in so much as the subject matter is already ludicrously over-the-top. For all the chin-stroking portentousness attached to Tolkien and his ilk, surely nobody takes that muck seriously?

Overlord certainly doesn't, kicking

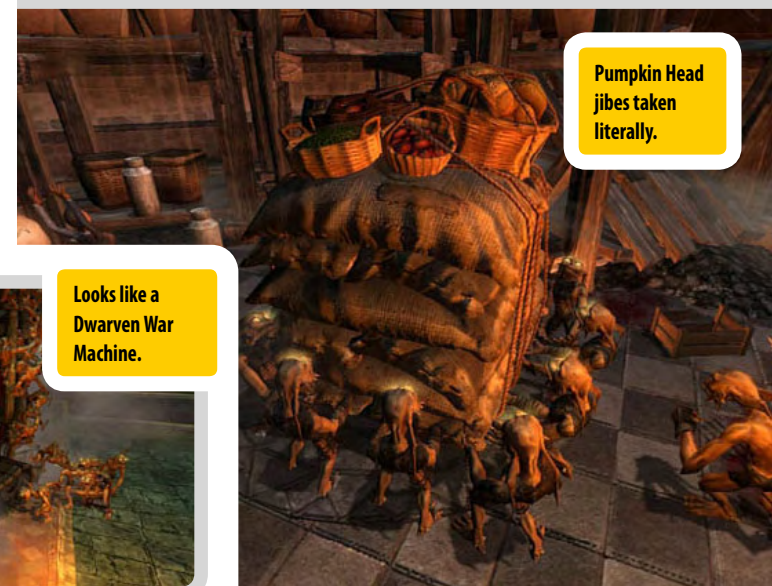
"Beyond the silly voices and ribald humour lurks an extremely playable game"

off in the Fable-esque village of Spree, presumably an hilarious spoof of Bree from The Lord Of the Rings. Much like Fable, the populace have comedy West Country accents, augmented by visitors from as far afield as Northern England and even redneck America. The overt wackiness is initially off-putting, but beyond the silly voices and ribald humour lurks an extremely playable game, albeit a difficult one to describe. Comparisons have been made with Nintendo's Pikmin, in that you, the titular Overlord, control hordes of minions who do your bidding.

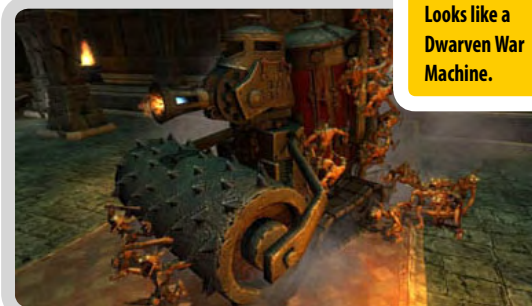
Stylistically at least, a more accurate comparison is to be found in the ➤



"Fly my pretties!"



Pumpkin Head jibes taken literally.



Looks like a Dwarven War Machine.



MEET THE FEEBLES

A great big melting pot...



That's you, that is, the eponymous **OVERLORD**. You're not so hard without your minions...



BROWN FIGHTERS are strong in general combat, and make good use of the things that they find.



RED FIRE IMPs are weak hand-to-hand, but are immune to fire and burn enemies from a distance.



GREEN ASSASSINS are immune to poison, and specialise in stealth attacks, leaping on the enemy's back.



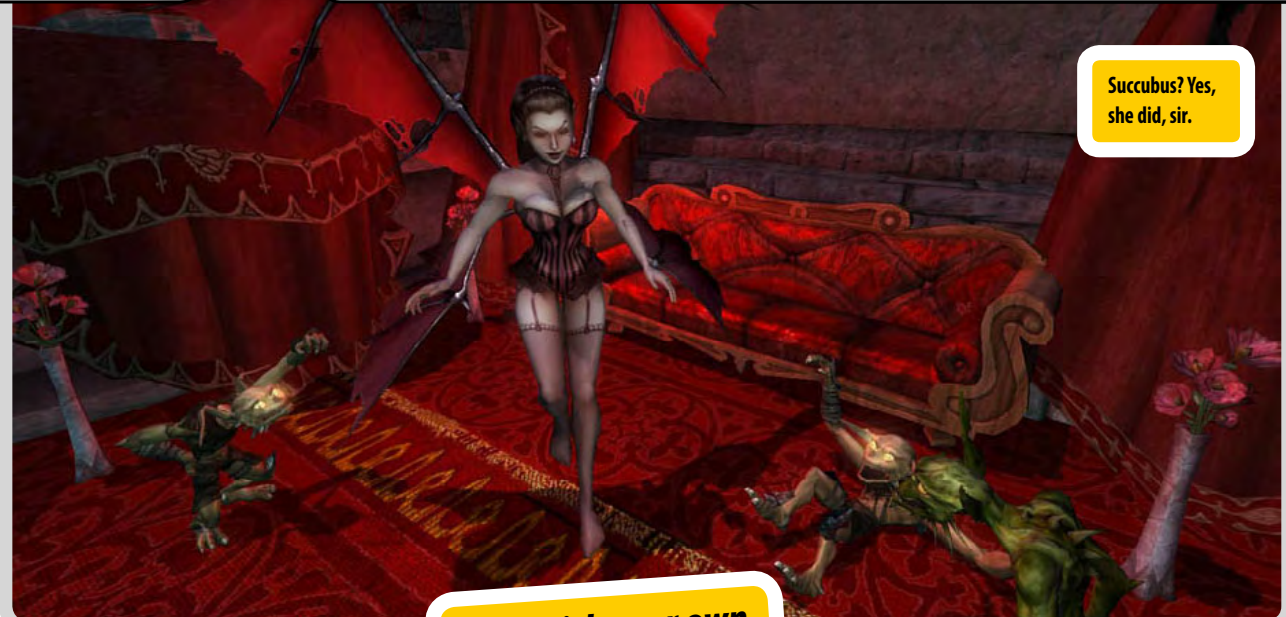
BLUE HEALERS are weak fighters, but they can resurrect other minions and are the only ones who can swim.



Minions have no truck with dwarves.



Fiddler on the table.



Succubus? Yes, she did, sir.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

They come in all shapes and sizes...



Halfling King



Serpent



Evernight Troll



Halfling King

With a nod to Mr Creosote from Monty Python's The Meaning Of Life, this gluttonous royal oaf is a big man, but he's in bad shape. Suffice to say, he goes out with a bang.

> Overlord continued

seminal '80s film, Gremlins, the critters from which bear a freak resemblance to your minions, both in terms of looks and behaviour. Watching them tear a pumpkin patch to shreds then proceed to fashion impromptu armour out of the pieces is uncannily similar, but in a highly impressive way.

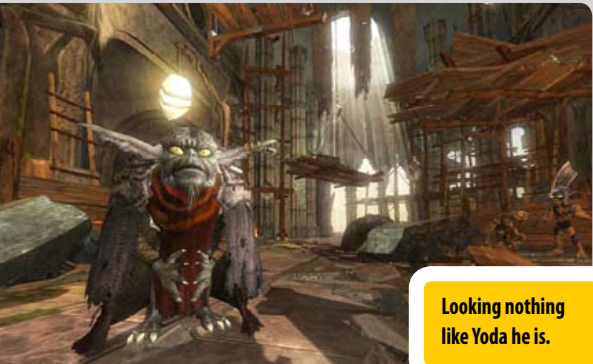
Destruction is what they do best, ripping up the scenery at your behest, as well as wantonly slaughtering the locals, be they sheep, peasant or wench. As the Overlord, you're armed with weapons and magic yourself, albeit somewhat ineffective. But as your adoring minions remind you, why risk your own life when they're happy to lay down theirs on your behalf?

It's a theory that works well, but for all the cartoon bloodshed, a lot of the game involves puzzle solving, using the unique skills of the four separate >

"Why risk your own life when minions lay down theirs on your behalf"



Your tower, still waiting for the builders.



Looking nothing like Yoda he is.



A Hobbit-hungry horde.



repair, and while it's initially mildly bewildering, it soon becomes a compelling challenge that can suck you in. Even some of the heavy-handed stabs at humour become bearable: as a snapshot of the tone of the game, imagine ten feral minions barging into an inn, coming out hammered and openly pissing in the streets. It's charming little asides such as this that lift Overlord above more serious genre

"Everything from dank swamps to brightly coloured meadows full of gambolling sheep"

mates, and despite the quest structure, a lot of the time you don't really notice that you're playing an RPG.

Drawing from a broad church of genres, games and inspirations, there's even room for a bit of soft furnishing. Using money that you pillage from hapless villagers, you can rebuild your Dark Tower to its previous splendour, under the watchful eye of your mistress (whose sister you also have an eye on).

Suffice to say there's always something to be getting on with, be it completing outstanding quests with your newfound minions, discovering new areas, or attempting to fathom the increasingly elaborate plot. It's almost a game that you could imagine yourself finishing, if only to see what fresh madness it throws up next. And it all looks suitably impressive, from dank swamps to brightly coloured meadows full of gambolling sheep.

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

Wacky voices. Sigh.

Find all four types



Given the mixture of gameplay styles, it's difficult to sum up Overlord in a media friendly soundbite. As such, it may struggle to attract the casual punter. However, those that make the dip into uncharted waters won't be disappointed. In fact, being an evil bastard has rarely been such fun. ●

Steve Hill

360Zine Verdict *An RPG without the grind*

- Interesting premise
- Excellent animation
- Needs a map

83%



FlatOut: Ultimate Carnage

The feel good game of the summer.

It's not often a game can generate pure emotion. So, yeah, we got a little bawly at Aeris in FF7, and getting a headshot in Halo 2 can often result in a cry of "hell yeah" coming from the direction of our 360, but we really can't remember the last time we sat down with a game and had just one word that truly described our feeling - wow.

As far as FlatOut is concerned, wow is about the only word for it. Pure, visceral, fender-bending action, from the second the green light shows, the game is a complete balls to the wall experience, and your eyes will bulge when you see

"From the second the green light shows the game is a complete balls to the wall experience"

As races go on, your cars will develop scratches and dirt.

Online destruction derbys - what Xbox Live was made for



Each car is made up of over 25,000 polygons, each of which is ready to be smashed.



the amazing level of destruction on display. In each course you race through, there are eleven other cars jostling for first place, which is impressive enough on its own. However, you really start to get a feel for just how chaotic things can get when you realise that there are 8,000 objects scattered around each track. Eight. Thousand. That's a lot of piles of tires, carefully stacked logs, cardboard boxes, and plate glass windows that are

waiting to be smashed through, and this is just a small part of what makes FlatOut so much fun.

Each course has been designed to maximise the potential destruction, some even to the point that the developers have placed giant greenhouses right over the course, leaving you with no other option (or so you'll say) but to smash straight through them and out the other side, watching the building crumble around ➤

RAGGYDOLLS, RAGGYDOLLS, TOYS LIKE YOU AND ME.

Miles of mini-games



Basketball



Bowling



High-jump



Basketball

The rules of basketball in FlatOut are simple – fling your ragdoll through the windscreen of your car, and land him in a basket with a high number behind it. Easy? Funnily enough, it's a lot harder than it looks.



> FlatOut continued

you. When all twelve cars start crashing into each other, flipping each other over, and shattering buildings next to you, you'll realise why you spent so much money on that HD TV, as this game looks simply phenomenal.

In FlatOut, aggressive driving is positively encouraged. Your nitro meter is charged by ramming into your opponents, crashing through scenery, or making your rivals rag-doll through the windscreen, and because of this, it's normal in races, both online and off, to see opponents purposefully heading for those rickety looking sheds, because smash through them, and you'll be awarded a nitrous boost, which could help propel you further into the lead.

It may sound a bit like Burnout, but it's not. Whereas Burnout's car-combat

has been refined to an almost clinical experience, FlatOut does away with that almost entirely – here, every car is game to be spun, rammed, smashed, and rammed, and unlike in Burnout, when you ram a car here, they aren't instantly taken out. Instead, the whole mid-race fight feels a lot more gritty, as you lock bumpers with a rival car heading around a corner, neck and neck, desperately looking for the nearest tree you can nudge him into.

There's one thing that FlatOut has always been famous for, and that's ragdoll bodies. FlatOut : Ultimate Carnage won't disappoint fans of the series here either, as there are numerous ways for you to exert your sadistic desires upon the innocent drivers of your car. The driver flinging mini-games on offer include Bowling, High-Jump, and

"Your nitro meter is charged by making your rivals rag-doll through the windscreen"



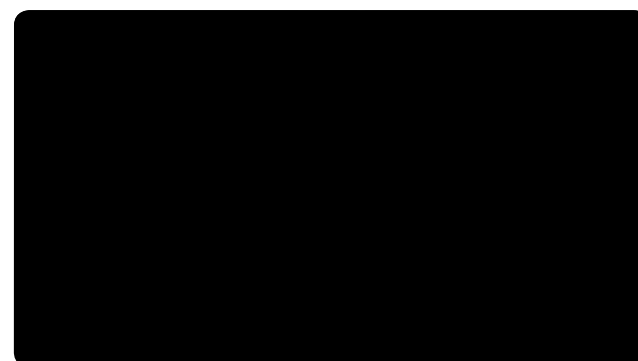
Pure chaos. And we love it.



Everything at road side is game to be flattened by your car.



There are loads of different cars to choose from.



Remember kids - always wear a seatbelt.





Ah well, at least you'll have a lot of boost when you're out of it.



Dust, cacti and automobiles.

"Practically the opposite of Forza 2, this is exactly what the 360 racing scene needed"

> Flatout continued

Basketball, all of which are played with your driver. Race your car to the end of a section, choose an angle by pressing "A" at the right time, and you'll fire your driver straight through the windscreen of the car, hopefully in the general direction of your target. Listening to a

guy's fearful screams has never been so rewarding.

But it gets better. FlatOut also features numerous online modes, all of which are incredibly easy to pick up and play, and completely lag free. From straight races, to the fantastically chaotic Deathmatch Derbys, which simply pit cars against each other in a

fight to destruction, FlatOut online is every bit as addictive as the single player game.

Available for a mere £30 in the shops, it's impossible to go far wrong with FlatOut, but it is worth mentioning that the game is actually an update of the Xbox game, FlatOut 2, with a few new features added on, and a hell of a graphical update.

Practically the opposite of Forza 2, this is exactly what the 360 racing scene needed, a game that doesn't take itself too seriously, and doesn't

Smashing through the cones has never been so much fun.



PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

Well, the graphics look OK, but what about the game?

Incredibly hard...

Winning races, and even starting to win online.



WOAH! This is incredible!

Beginning to get the hang of it.



Online destruction derbys - what Xbox Live was made for.

scrimp on the thrills. Even for those of you who already own the Xbox version, FlatOut : Ultimate Carnage is almost an essential purchase – a pure adrenaline rush, from start to finish. ●

Ian Morris



360Zine Verdict *Burnout has its work cut out here.*

- 👍 Incredible graphics
- 👍 So much destruction
- 👎 Difficulty may be a turn off for some

89%



Publisher: 505 Games
Developer: From Software
Heritage: Armored Core series, Chromehounds
Link: www.sega.com/gamesite/armoredcore4/
OUT NOW

Armored Core 4

Mega mecha fight thing

Giant robots blowing each other into tiny fragments - let's face it, it's one of the reasons we play videogames. Which is why it's a surprise that the Armored Core series barely elicits so much as a grunt of recognition from Western gamers. Or perhaps that isn't so shocking when you have a front end with so many user-unfriendly elements. No auto-save is the worst of its sins, but the confusing Assembly mode can have you tinkering with your set-up for ages, only to realise when exiting that you've not enough money to use your new schematic. And you can't just reverse your mistakes, but have to unequip every part you can't afford and replace the original pieces. Not fun.

Decisions, decisions

Once you're accustomed to the bizarre menus, pimping your robotic ride with

"The difficulty curve is steep - you'll feel like a bullet magnet at first"

new weapons and parts genuinely makes a difference to your approach. Do you pick a defence-heavy mech that's a pig to control, or go for a lithe missile-dodger that suffers massive damage from every hit? With no advice from the game it's easy to create something that's unsuited to the next mission, but with the choice of skipping some in each chapter you're bound to find a task you can cope with. The difficulty curve is steep - you'll feel like a bullet magnet at first - but soon you'll be zipping through the air, gunning choppers left and right, before swooping down to deliver a payload into an enemy ship. It's ultra-satisfying.

The campaign's missions are repetitive but fairly short, so it's an easy game to dip in and out of. And single-player is essentially just training for online, which is fast-paced and exciting. There's nothing quite like an 8-player Battle Royal with frantic melee fighting and missiles flying past at a rate of knots. Tough for casuals then, but a much better bet for mech-heads than Transformers: The Game. ●

Chris Schilling



The Plasma Cannon can be ruthlessly effective in the right hands.

METAL GEAR

Customisation made easy

Altering the specs of your robot is great fun, and you can test out the new schematic to see if your modifications work. You can change anything from the head through the weapons to the type of boosters, with balance and weight to take into consideration. And then you can paint it and add decals, just to add that personal touch.



Boosting takes some getting used to, but soon you'll be flying gracefully.

The lock-on system works well most of the time, though it sometimes gets stuck on more distant targets.

Environments lack detail, but if that's what's keeping the pace up then it's a worthy sacrifice.

The story's probably best ignored, but the action is enjoyable enough to compensate.

360Zine Verdict

Enjoyably speedy mech-on-mech action - tough for newcomers though.



Surprisingly quick



Online play is superb



Lacklustre looks and minor irritants

79%

PCGZine

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The first DirectX 10 game –
see what all the fuss is about inside!

TABULA RASA

THE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

The man who invented MMOs is back

BIOSHOCK

The future of FPS games is here



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Xbox Live Arcade Round-Up

The strategies garrison the XBLA this month, and a new Pac-Man addicts us all over again.



Carcassonne

Developer: Sierra Online

Publisher: Sierra Online

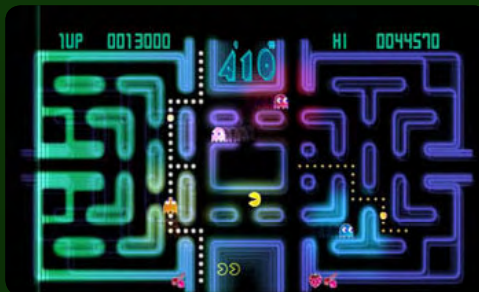
Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

Based on the board game of the same name, this is the strategy title that's set to go head-to-head with Catan for the king of the board games on XBLA. The whole concept revolves around tiles, which each player draws at random, and then places on the board to form almost a blueprint of a city. Each tile has a certain shape on it which resembles either part of a road, or a town, and by completing the shapes, you can complete the object, and earn points. It's fun to play, and surprisingly easy to get into – we wouldn't be surprised if this replaced Uno as the relaxing game of choice.

- 👍 Easy to play
- 👍 Plenty of strategic possibilities
- 👎 Lack of modes

Don't cry for me, Carcassonne.

87%



Pac-Man C.E.

Developer: Namco Bandai Games Inc.

Publisher: Namco Bandai Games Inc.

Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

So, it's Pac-Man again, but this time, that's definitely a good thing. While the same basic gameplay remains intact (you still have to guide the friendly yellow pill popper around a maze while avoiding ghosts), the formula has been tweaked ever so subtly, and this has made it all the more addictive. There are several modes on offer, each bringing a slight variation on the Pac-Man formula, and each providing a distinct challenge. Sped up, redesigned, and with the first new mazes in 26 years, this is the Pac-Man game that'll get you hooked all over again.

- 👍 So addictive
- 👍 Simple, but attractive visuals
- 👎 No two player

Let's party like it's 1981

81%



Band of Bugs

Developer: Ninja Bee **Publisher:** Ninja Bee **Price:** 800 MP (~£6.80)

A turn-based strategy game in the vein of Final Fantasy Tactics, from the developers of the sublime Outpost Kaloki X, you just knew this is going to be good. Deceptively simple, the grid-based gameplay will be instantly familiar to anyone who's played a turn based strategy game over the years, but is also incredibly easy for newbies to get into. With a number of different classes of bugs under your command and a nice variety of missions, which each present a different situation that will affect how you approach the battle, Band of Bugs is an instant XBLA classic. It even has a built in level editor that'll let you share your maps with your friends!

- 👍 Simply strategic
- 👍 Plenty to do
- 👍 Intuitive combat

Band of Bugge...oh.

90%



Prince Of Persia

Developer: Gameloft **Publisher:** Ubisoft **Price:** 800 MP (~£6.80)

A graphically enhanced (and slightly tweaked) version of the 1989 classic, Prince of Persia plays as well as it ever did. However, although the graphics certainly look fantastic for an XBLA game, and the new enemies and traps help to freshen the experience slightly, the main problem here is the value for money – as you have to save the princess within an hour, the game can be played through, start to finish, in 60 minutes. That makes it around a pound for every ten minutes. While the extra modes (Survival, which challenges you to reach the end without dying, and Time Trial), go some way to making this better value, we'd still have to question the pricing.

- 👍 Stunning graphically
- 👎 60 minutes of gameplay
- 👎 No d-pad control!

Sands of Time run out too soon

71%

**Simon Sayers**

Simon threw his toys out of the pram recently after being rammed off the road by a screaming kid driving a Ford Focus in Forza 2 - just as he was about to come first.

Winning ways

We were chuffed this month to discover that we'd hit the dizzy heights of 126th place on the world-wide Xbox live leader-boards for Colin McRae: Dirt. We actually thought we must be pretty good drivers and might even be real contenders for that coveted number one spot - until we remembered that we'd been playing Dirt for 2 weeks prior to release and had

only checked the leader-board a few hours after retail copies had landed. Now that the competition has arrived we've dropped well below the 10,000 mark. Oh well... it's the taking part that counts, so they say.

It's the taking part that counts...



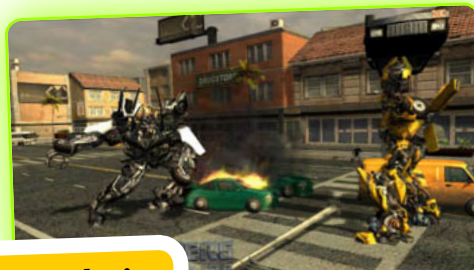
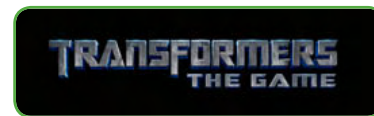
The 360Zine Giveaway!

Win a copy of Transformers: The Game

Due for release in conjunction with this summer's live action movie, Transformers: The Game is hoping to 'buck the trend' and become a critical as well as a commercial movie-to-videogame success. The impressive trailer of the game's opening sequence is available on the net and it's looking like fans of the shape-changing alien robots may well be in for a treat. There isn't a multiplayer mode, but Traveller's Tales have promised next-gen graphics, a completely destructible environment, open-ended gameplay, heaps of mindless fun and dozens of shape-changing alien robots to command.

Transformers: The Game is released on July 20th and we've got 5 copies to give away. All you need to do win yourself a copy is answer this question...

The storyline in Transformers: The Game was penned by the writer of the acclaimed "TRANSFORMERS" animated series, but what's his name?



[Click here to try and win Transformers: The Game](#)

On Marketplace

Watch your opponents squirm on Vision Cam



WHAT'S HOT?

Command & Conquer 3: Map Pack 1

Price: 500 points

Command & Conquer 3 has proven that real-time strategy games can be ported successfully from PC to console. The latest map pack offers great value for money with a wide range of battlefield locations available. The five maps are also playable in single-player skirmishes.

XBOX LIVE ARCADE: TOP CHOICE

Band of Bugs

Price: 800 points

We're totally addicted to the refreshing strategy title Band of Bugs. It's unique, fast-paced and instantly accessible. There are several compelling multiplayer modes and for the first time on XBLA there's a map editor allowing you to create your own levels and bring them online.

COMING SOON

Exit

The PSP puzzle action game has now been confirmed for the XBLA. Exit requires players to use decision-making skills and wits to escape various obstacles while rescuing people from more than 100 different emergencies - A launch date is yet to be confirmed.



Exclusive content for Xbox 360

Four unique multiplayer modes for up to 4 players



We're totally addicted to the refreshing strategy title Band of Bugs



360Zine Clan of the Month

XGL's competitive spirit, fair-play attitude and knack for winning matches has gained them a glowing reputation in Xbox circles. They say you can judge a man by the friends he keeps and XGL have plenty of those, with excellent relationships with many other top UK Clans who return time and time again to battle it out online. XGL are a clan to be truly reckoned with and are getting their members into shape this summer before the official re-launch of a swanky new website.

What makes a good clan?

I would say a good clan would be one that is organised when it comes to setting up clan matches with other clans. I also think that having clan members that get along with each other and other clans is also important.



Hosting tournaments throughout the summer.

"Having clan members that get along with other clans is cool"

What is your team's most memorable moment on Xbox live?

Our most memorable moment was when we first featured in a magazine back in 2006. I think it is a good achievement for any clan that goes into a magazine as it shows that they have been recognised by the gaming world.

We're delighted to appear in 360Zine!

What games are you most looking forward to this year?

More or less every clan member is hyped up for Halo 3, but we are also looking forward to Unreal Tournament 3, PGR 4, Huxley and can't wait for Gears of War 2!



Potleg's bark is worse than his bite.

CHALLENGE US TO... ANY XBOX 360 GAME

To challenge us head over to www.xglclan.co.uk and post on our forums. We welcome challenges on a range of Xbox 360 games, including Gears of War, Battlefield MC, Rainbow Six Vegas and Forza Motorsport 2.

Power to the Podcasters!

Turn on, tune in...

Do not underestimate the power of the podcast! Clever individuals have used this increasingly popular medium over the last few years to generate their own radio shows, providing unique, witty and insightful commentary on the latest news from the world of gaming. We've been trawling through dozens of podcasts over the last few weeks in an attempt to track down the very best shows on the net. These are the ones we recommend:

● Gamertag radio

Gamertag Radio has recently celebrated the 100th episode of their long running online radio show in which they offer enthusiastic commentary on the latest goings-on in the industry, alongside interviews with industry professionals. GTR has gained a substantial following due to their unique spin on the latest Xbox 360 games. GTR is a show full of sharp wit and thoughtful insights into every aspect of 360.

www.gamertagradio.com

● Unscripted 360

Largely unscripted, raw, live and uncut, U360 is a podcast centred on the people that make up the Xbox 360 Community. It's an entertaining, lively show doused with high quality content. U360 are planning to reach an even bigger audience with the launch of U360 TV later this month.

www.unscripted360.com

"Sharp wit and thoughtful insights into every aspect of 360"

GTR is a fun show with a hip twist.

News for Gamers by Gamers.

360Plex

● 360plex

360plex offers an in-depth insight into the latest games with interesting and personality driven banter from lively and Xbox 360-savvy presenters. They cover the latest news as well as conducting interviews with special guests. They're not afraid to ask the questions others dare not ask and their sense of humour ensures that the show is full of character as well as being informative.

www.360plex.com

Each of these podcasts offers something different in terms of content and each put their own unique spin on the latest news, but they've all got the same goal in common: to inform and entertain anyone who has an interest in 360.



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> Inbox

We received 100s of emails on the back of Halo 3. Here are a few choice comments...

WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE final version of Halo 3 is an option to choose the number of vehicles in a level. It would be amazingly fun to have a dozen banshees in a massive air battle or have a huge mongoose swarm on the ground.

> **Kevin Kuemmet**

THE BETA WAS GREAT, BUT MAYBE private ranked rooms would be better, then you can play against your mates online without having ppl you don't know ruining the experience (we all know who they are).

> **Stuart Boldy**

> *Agreed Stuart. But you can usually silence those idiots with a Spartan laser blast.*

DIDN'T LIKE IT TOO MUCH... SAME AS Halo 2 so why should I buy pay \$60 for a game I already played... Movie mode is garbage and useless... Why would I want to watch my friends 12min. match...

> **Steven J**

> *You're obviously not a show-off like us. We loved watching our finest moments back on vid.*

I WOULD LOVE TO SEE HIGHLY customizable game types and customizable armour colour design schemes.

> **Robert Wilson**

I'D LIKE TO SEE A WHOLE LOT OF pretty tacked on to the existing engine without affecting performance or gameplay. Hey, if Carmack can do it, Bungie can figure it out! :)

> **Ben Isherwood**

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE END OF Halo 3 the words "to be continued".

> **Márcio Silva**

> *They'll find some way to keep Halo going. Mark our words.*

I WASN'T ORIGINALLY A FAN OF THE Halo series probably because i didn't have online on the original Xbox, Halo 3 has converted me, it is a brilliant game with a few glitches which is to be expected with a game at this stage of development. I love the inclusion of the bubble shield and the satisfaction at hitting someone with the spartan laser and a perfectly timed grenade throw. An all in all brilliant game. Keep doing what you are doing at 360Zine brilliant online mag :)

> **Daniyal Harris-vajda**

> *Bubble shields rock - and thank goodness they're not impenetrable.*

THE HALO 3 BETA WAS AN EXCELLENT experience that kept me entertained for hours. This game is already bounds ahead of its predecessors without forgetting where it came from. I hope the final version incorporates different races to use in multiplayer. I also hope these races have differing strengths and weaknesses as opposed to merely being different skins.

> **Jeff Yenzer**

> *Covenant nasties at six o'clock. Hell yeah...*

MULTIPLAYER IS GREAT, BUT I PREFER to play alone, so how about more single player adventures?

> **Ken Bruton**

> *Expect single player to be beefed-up after the lightweight solo mode of Halo 2.*

ENHANCEMENTS IN VISUALS DIDN'T "wow" me. And please tell me that the final release will increase team size in on-line play. New weapons and other accessories were a nice addition. What can one say? It's Halo! I've already put my \$ down for Legendary!

> **Robert Inot**

WELL, I THOUGHT THE BETA WAS KIND of boring to tell the truth, but I am a big fan of the first two. What I'd like to see in the final version is a phenomenal single player campaign that actually has an ending, and that they don't reveal Master Chief's face!

> **Sean Thom**

WIN!
HALO 3
LEGENDARY
EDITION



Win Halo 3 Legendary Edition!
Simply tell us what you think of Halo 3 or what you'd like to see in the final version for your chance to win!

GRAPHICS 93%, SOUND 93%, Hopefully lives up to the hype.

> **Jason Ashcroft**

> *Chances of living up to hype? 93%*

THIS GAME LOOKS FANTASTIC.

The new weapons are a sight to behold.

> **Josh Moore**

> *What's your favourite? Dismounted turret gun for us...*

**READER
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
send us a
letter now!

I LOVED HALO 3. The gameplay was phenomenal and the replayability was good. Personally, I really dislike all the people downplaying the graphics as if they were completely terrible. The graphics are great. People seem to forget this is Halo, it isn't Gears. The graphics should not be the same. Moreso than in Halo 2, I also find myself loving Matchmaking. The new and reworked ranking systems add a lot more balance to the types of parties you get. Overall, I was really impressed by everything in the beta. The balance of equipment was very good, and they add a lot to tactical gameplay, something which is very important to me. What I'd like to see in the final game is mostly a complete story and gripping single player campaign. I love the Halo story more than anything else about the series. The depth of which the story goes is fantastic. I know Bungie will not fail to entice players with a good conclusion to this trilogy. I hope the environments are bigger in multiplayer as well, and don't feel as "boxed in" as in the previous games.

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Bungie has stated they want to move away from confining the players in both single player and multiplayer. I look forward to seeing how they do this in the final game.

> **Derek Strough**

I WOULD JUST LIKE TO SEE MAPS were more thought out, and less jumping, button bashing goes on.

Still a great looking game, me for one looking forward to single player mode more than the monotony that is multiplayer.

> **Julian Toseland**

> *Team-up with mates - it brings multiplayer to life.*

THIS GAME LOOKS AMAZING, AND I don't know of any other game that keeps peoples interest in it before release as much as Halo seems to. To bad it is the last game, but I have a feeling everything we have wanted and more will be coming soon with the release of halo 3, and I can't wait.

> **Michael**

THE BETA IS F***ING AWESOME. I WANT more, I want legendary!!!

> **Paul**

I'VE SEEN THE FUTURE OF GAMING - and it's name is Halo 3

> **Magnus Olsson**

I PERSONALLY LOVED THE HALO 3 beta. It gave us Halo fans a peek at what we'll be playing for hours upon hours later this year. It was also a very polished presentation of the game, making it

almost seem like a portion of a retail version. When Halo 3 launches I would like to see the full game include the Elites as playable character models in the multiplayer portion of the game.

P.S. Love the magazine, keep the work up!

> **Brandon Sprouse**

> *Thanks. And face it - we all loved Halo 3 beta because, like this mag, it's free!*

THE HALO 3 BETA WAS SUPERB, I loved the man cannon, great fun especially when you ride a mongoose or warthog into it. I wish that you could have used a pelican dropship in the game as this would be great fun on the larger maps.

I would like there to be more wharthog variants such as the now hog or troop carrier wharthog that were rumoured before the release of the second game.

> **Anthony Goddard**

THE BETA WAS FUN I LOVE THE FACT that the weapons are mostly balanced now. As long as the level design stays

great and they give the graphics a little upgrade it'll live up to the hype.

> **Michael Pontari**

THIS GAME LOOKS AMAZING, AND I don't know of any other game that keeps people's interest in it before release as much as Halo seems to. Too bad it is the last game, but I have a feeling everything we have wanted and more will be coming soon with the realse of Halo 3, and I can't wait.

> **Michael Pontari**

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE AT THE END OF halo 3 the words "To be continued..."

> **Márcio Silva**

> *They say this is the end of the trilogy, but call us cynical hacks if you like, we somehow doubt this is the last you'll see of Master Chief. And, Michael, there's also a little game called GTA IV this year that some people seem to be interested in.*

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE NAKED PEOPLE and also birds that you can jump onto their backs and fly away.

> **Nic**

MISSIVE OF THE MONTH

Send us your news and views for your chance to win

If you have any news or views on what's happening in the world of 360 or you'd like to comment on anything that you've read in this month's 360Zine click here now!

We'll bung a spanking new game for the best missive of the month.

The best letter
bags a copy of
The Darkness!



In **360Zine** Issue 9

BY POPULAR REQUEST

Mass Effect

REVIEWS
Transformers
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PREVIEWS
WWE SmackDown
vs. Raw 2008
Kane & Lynch:
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